

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 NEAE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

PM-03 NSC-05 SS-15 ACDA-10 SAJ-01 AID-05 EUR-12 /083 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7140

INFO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 2696

BANGKOK FOR AMBASSADOR SAXBE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR IN PK US

SUBJECT: INDIAN PRESS HIGHLIGHTS STATEMENTS OF CHAVAN, KISSINGER
AND KAUL

BEGIN SUMMARY: ALL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PAPERS APPEARING IN NEW DELHI FEB. 26 DEVOTED PROMINENT FRONTPAGE SPACE TO SEVERAL STORIES ON INDO-US-PAKISTAN RELATIONS. THE LEAD STORY WAS FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN'S STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT EXPRESSING INDIA'S "STRONG DISAPPOINTMENT" OVER THE "RETROGRADE DECISION" OF WASHINGTON ON THE RESUMPTION OF ARMS SUPPLY TO PINDI. NEWSPAPERS HIGHLIGHTED, MOSTLY ON FRONTPAGES, THE STATEMENTS OF DR. KISSINGER AND AMBASSADOR KAUL. SOME PAPERS RAN THE ATHERTON PRESS BRIEFING.

EDITORIAL REACTION WAS GENERALLY BALANCED. END SUMMARY.

1. COVERAGE OF FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN'S PARLIAMENT STATEMENT WAS EXTENSIVE, BEGINNING ONE PAGE ONE AND CONTINUING IN INSIDE PAGES. FOUR OF THE NINE DELHI PAPERS ACCORDED THE STORY THE LEAD NEWS SPOT. HEADLINES STRESSED THE US ACTION WILL MAR INDO-US
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TIES. A TYPICAL HEADLINE APPEARED IN THE TIMES OF INDIA: "US

MOVE SETBACK TO PEACE: CHAVAN." IN THEIR HEADLINES, OPPOSITION PAPERS, MOSCOW LINING PATRIOT AND THE RIGHTIST MOTHERLAND, QUOTED CHAVAN THAT THE WASHINGTON DECISION IS A "RETROGRADE" STEP: "US DECISION ON ARMS RETROGRADE: CHAVAN"(PATRIOT).

2. STORY CONTENTS STRESSED INDIAS CONCERN OVER THE US DECISION AND REITERATED INDIAS PEACEFUL POLICY TOWARD NEIGHBORS AND "UNCERTAINTY" OF CHAVAN'S US VISIT. MOSTLY WRITTEN BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS, COVERING THE PARLIAMENT, REPORTAGE UNDERScoreD THAT THE MINISTER CHARACTERIZED THE WASHINGTON ACTION AS "RETROGRADE" AND "INCONSISTENT WITH THE STATEMENTS MADE BY DR. KISSINGER." BASED ON EXTENSIVE QUOTES FROM THE MINISTER'S STATEMENT, WRITERS HIGHLIGHTED CHAVAN'S WARNING OF "SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES" TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE SUBCONTINENT AND TO "MATURE RELATIONS WITH THE US. ANOTHER POINT THEY STRESSED WAS THE MINISTER'S STATEMENT THAT IN VIEW OF THE DECISION HIS VISIT TO THE US "CERTAINLY REQUIRED RECONSIDERATION."

THE CONGRESS PARTY ORIENTED NATIONAL HERALD WAS THE ONLY DELHI PAPER TO CARRY IN FULL THE TEXT OF CHAVAN'S STATEMENT AND ITS CORRESPONDENT COMMENTED THAT "THE GENERAL MOOD IN THE HOUSE WAS ONE OF INDIGNATION AT THE US DECISION."

3. NEWSPAPERS PROMINENTLY FEATURED AMBASSADOR KAUL'S PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT DOUBTING CREDIBILITY OF US ASSURANCES. (SEE SEPTTEL).

4. REPORTAGE ALSO PROMINENTLY CARRIED DR. KISSINGER'S STATEMENT CHIDING KAUL PUBLICLY--FRONTPAGE HEADLINES IN THE TIMES OF INDIA AND MOTHERLAND. OTHER HEADLINES: "KISSINGER: INDIA PILING UP ARMS" (INDIAN EXPRESS) AND "KAUL'S VIEWS IRK KISSINGER" (NATIONAL HERALD). STORY CONTENTS STRESSED THE SECRETARY'S COMMENT THAT MINISTER CHAVAN'S STATEMENT WAS RESTRAINED AND STATESMANLIKE BUT THE KAUL'S STATEMENTS WERE "UNACCEPTABLE." ITEMS MENTIONED HIS DECLARATION THAT THE US DOES NOT INTEND TO ENGAGE IN A "MASSIVE" SUPPLY OF ARMS TO PINDI AND HIS GREAT STRESS ON IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH INDIA. THEY ADDED THAT IN A REFERENCE TO INDIA'S ARMS SUPPLY FROM THE SOVIET UNION, THE SECRETARY SAID THAT IT IS STRANGE TO HAVE AN EMBARGO ON
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ONE COUNTRY IN SOUTH ASIA "WHEN ITS NEIGHBOR IS NOT EXERCISING COMPARABLE RESTRAINT." THE INDIAN EXPRESS WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT T V PARASURAM LED HIS STORY BY SAYING THAT DR. KISSINGER DEFENDED AMERICA'S DECISION....BY ARGUING THAT INDIA HAD NOT SHOWN 'COMPARABLE RESTRAINT' AND HAD BEEN ACQUIRING OR PRODUCING NEARLY A BILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF ARMS A YEAR."

5. SOME NEWSPAPERS CARRIED BRIEF STORIES BASED ON THE

ATHERTON PRESS BRIEFING, EMPHASIZING HIS STATEMENT THAT THE US HAS NO INTENTION TO RESUME ITS PRE-1965 "PARITY" POLICY AND DOES NOT "WANT TO IMPLEMENT A POLICY WHICH WILL FUEL AN ARMS RACE."
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OTHER POINTS LISTED IN THE STORIES INCLUDED HIS REFERENCE TO PAKISTAN'S DESIRE TO OBTAIN ANTI-AIRCRAFT AND ANTI-TANK MISSILES; US RECOGNITION OF THE PINDI NEED TO HAVE "MODERNIZATION" OF ITS ARMED FORCES, AND HIS DENIAL THAT MR. BHUTTO RAISED THE QUESTION OF A NAVAL BASE FOR THE US IN HIS WASHINGTON TALKS.

6. CORRESPONDENTS OF TWO DAILIES, STATESMAN AND INDIAN EXPRESS AND THE TIMES OF INDIA EDITORIAL QUOTED DIFFERENT FIGURES OF ARMS INDIA AND PAKISTAN HAD RECEIVED FROM OUTSIDE. THE STATESMAN CITED STATE DEPARTMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT INDIA HAD RECEIVED

DOLS 1,697 MILLION IN OUTSIDE ARMS BETWEEN 1964 AND 1973, AND PAKISTAN JUST HALF OF THIS, DOLS 851 MILLION." IT ADDED: "BY CONTRAST, THE WORKING PAPER SAID PAKISTAN HAD RECEIVED DOLS 312 MILLION IN ARMS DURING THIS 10-YEAR PERIOD FROM CHINA, UNCLASSIFIED

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DOLS 214 MILLION FROM FRANCE, DOLS 160 MILLION FROM THE USA, DOLS 32 MILLION FROM WEST GERMANY, DOLS 24 MILLION FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND DOLS 8 MILLION FROM BRITAIN." THE INDIAN EXPRESS CORRESPONDENT REPORTED: "THE FIGURES SUPPLIED BY THE DEPARTMENT APPARENTLY SHOWING THE WRITTEN-DOWN BOOK VALUES FOR THE SECOND-HAND OR USED ARMS GIVEN TO PAKISTAN REVEAL THAT AS AGAINST DOLS 1,886 MILLION WORTH OF ARMS IMPORTED BY INDIA WITH TEN TIMES PAKISTAN'S POPULATION, PAKISTAN HAS GOT ARMS WORTH DOLS 909 MILLION ." IN A LEAD EDITORIAL, THE TIMES OF INDIA MENTIONED:"ON WASHINGTONS OWN TESTIMONY, PAKISTAN IMPORTED ARMS WORTH DOLS 851 MILLION BETWEEN 1964 AND 1973 AGAINST INDIAS DOLS 697 (REPEAT 697) MILLION."

7. OTHER RELATED NEWS TREATMENT INCLUDED BRIEF REPORTS IN SEVERAL PAPERS OF A "NATIONAL SEMINAR" IN DELHI FEB. 27 TO DISCUSS THE "RISING THREAT OF AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN ASIA;" OF KABUL STUDYING "CAREFULLY" THE US DECISION TO SUPPLY ARMS TO PINDI; BHUTTO'S LARKANA STATEMENT THAT INDIA HAS "NOTHING TO FEAR" FROM THE WASHINGTON DECISION; SOVIET DEFENSE MINISTER GRECHKO'S DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE US ACTION; ARAB LOANS MAY HELP PAKISTAN TO BUY AMERICAN WEAPONS, AND REPORTS THAT PAKISTAN IS NOW FREE TO GET FROM THE US "ALL LETHAL WEAPONS SHORT OF NUCLEAR ARMS."

8. EDITORIAL COMMENTS WERE GENERALLY BALANCED,"THE TIMES OF INDIA HELD:IN ALL FAIRNESS IT CANNOT BE SAID THAT THE US DECISION WILL GRAVELY UPSET THE STATUS QUO IN THE SUB-CONTINENT." IT ASKED NEW DELHI "TO BEAR IN MIND" IN RESPONDING TO THE AMERICAN MOVE OR MOVES THAT WASHINGTON NOW DOES NOT ALLOT THE KEY ROLE TO PAKISTAN AND IT IS NOT HOSTILE EITHER TO INDIAN ASPIRATIONS OR ITS POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT." THE HINDUSTANHLY" BECAUSE "POLITICAL MATURITY AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS ARE WORTH A LOT OF GUNS." IT ASSERTED THAT "HYSTERICAL DENUNCIATIONS OR ANY CANCELLATION OF MR. CHAVAN'S PROJECTED VISIT TO WASHINGTON SHOULD BE AVOIDED." THE RIGHTIST MOTHERLAND TERMED THE US DECISION AS "BLATANT ATTEMPT TO TRIGGER A NEW ARMS RACE IN SOUTH ASIA." ARGUING THAT THE DECISION COULD HAVE BEEN MADE A LITTLE EARLIER OR A LITTLE LATER, THE ECONOMIC TIMES EDITORIAL ASKED: "WAS IT SO TIMED BECAUSE OF A DESIRE TO SHOW STRONG REACTION TO THE KASHMIR ACCORD OR THE SOVIET DEFENCE MINISTER MARSHAL UNCLASSIFIED

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GRECHKO'S VISIT TO NEW DELHI." IT ADVISED INDIA TO CALL OFF
CHAVAN'S VISIT FOR PROTOCOL REASONS AS DR. KISSINGER IS LIKELY
TO BE AWAY.SCHNEIDER

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